



Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)
High Level Retreat on Mediation:

**Enhancing Dialogue and
Reconciliation for Conflict Prevention
and Transformation**

A report of the
3rd Intergovernmental Authority on Development's (IGAD)
High-level Retreat on Mediation, held from 12 - 14 September, 2018
in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia



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1. Executive Summary

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) and the European Union (EU) organised the IGAD High Level Retreat on Mediation from 12 to 14 September 2018 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Held within the theme ‘Enhancing Dialogue and Reconciliation for Conflict Prevention and transformation’, the retreat was a platform for learning and sharing experiences between the IGAD Members of the Roster, IGAD Special Envoys; AU’s Members of the Panel of the Wise and members from the Regional Economic Communities/Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs) such as the Common Market for East and Southern Africa (COMESA), Southern African Development Community (SADC); Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and East African Community (EAC). The retreat provided a platform for discussions on the role of reconciliation and dialogue as tools for conflict prevention, resolution and transformation. More so, it looked at the current peace processes taking place in the IGAD region and in Africa, focusing on how dialogue has been used to impact positively the outcomes of the peace processes towards sustainable peace agreements. It further provided the opportunity for mediators and mediation practitioners to assess the missed opportunities in which dialogue should have taken place in the build up to peace processes.

In assessing the ways and means towards promoting dialogue and reconciliation the retreat focused on a variety of themes to ascertain the fundamental elements that will be required to achieve effective dialogue amongst conflicting parties. Of significance was the acknowledgement of the key role that religious leaders and religious institutions play in promoting dialogue as well as reconciliation. Some of the key highlighted points that were raised included: the need for in depth conflict analysis to ensure that conflicts are well understood and therefore better managed; the need for political will to foster national and regional dialogue; the need for documentation and utilisation of good practices on dialogue and reconciliation; developing a curriculum on reconciliation and dialogue; and highlighting the vital role that women and youth play in dialogue and reconciliation, among others. The participants highlighted the importance of overcoming the past and trauma healing as crucial in the prevention of future conflicts.

The discussions during the retreat also contributed towards developing a reconciliation framework and a dialogue index for the IGAD region. Going forward, IGAD will undertake further consultations towards the development of the reconciliation framework that will guide member states in reconciliation initiatives in the IGAD region. An outcomes document was prepared at the conclusion of the retreat, and which is attached as an appendix to this report.

2. Introduction

IGAD was established in 1996 to supersede the Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD) which was founded in 1986 to mitigate the effects of the severe droughts and other natural disasters. The IGAD region comprises of 8 countries, namely; Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda. Since its revitalization, IGAD has been a key player in conflict prevention, resolution and mitigation of evolving and emerging security challenges in the region. IGAD spearheaded the Sudanese peace talks and mediation process resulting in the achievement of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) that resolved the longest

civil war in the region and led to the independence of South Sudan in 2011. Similarly, the region has been involved in resolving the internal crisis in Somalia and helped in the restoration of the Somali government for the first time in two decades. The IGAD region is currently leading the ongoing South Sudan peace talks that have led to the Cessation of Hostilities and signing of the peace agreement- the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS).

In efforts to institutionalize IGAD's wealth of experience in leading mediation processes and complementing it with mechanisms for Track II diplomacy, the IGAD Mediation Support Unit (MSU) was established to utilize a regional pool of high profile public servants, former diplomats, eminent persons and traditional leaders who can be mobilized to mediate conflicts at both state and community levels. As the IGAD MSU works towards supporting mediation processes and practice amongst its member states, the need for dialogue and reconciliation as a prerequisite for conflict prevention and transformation has increasingly been entrenched in the organisation's efforts in mediation. Moreover, the IGAD MSU continues to build national capacities on mediation as well as infrastructure for peace and stability.

Although several countries in the IGAD region are experiencing volatile situations as a result of inter-state and intra-state tensions and conflicts, in recent times countries have been undergoing reconciliation attempts to create unity at both the national and regional level. This can be seen in the case of the Eritrea-Ethiopia conflict, where for nearly two decades a bloody conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea has caused the deaths of tens of thousands of people and displaced more than half a million. The recent peace accord has been promising to attaining peace with much work ahead in restoring and maintaining the peace between the two countries. Since June 2017, the Somali government have made attempts at reconciliation in Mogadishu. With peace processes culminating in agreements, the need for reconciliation and dialogue is needed now more than ever, not just for the opposing parties, but also for the nation at large in order to restore and maintain peace and stability. Kenya's recent "Handshake" provides an opportunity for efforts towards a peaceful Kenya; however, reconciliation amongst the populace in the country should accompany these efforts being undertaken at national level.

3. Objectives of the Retreat

- Identify entry points for dialogue with stakeholders outside of peace processes that are able to influence positive outcomes;
- Discuss the development and operationalization of a regional reconciliation framework;
- Highlight the role of dialogue and reconciliation in conflict prevention and transformation through experience sharing and lessons learnt on dialogue and reconciliation.
- Identify the challenges and best practices towards promoting dialogue and reconciliation.
- Strengthen the nexus between dialogue, reconciliation and mediation.

4. Proceedings and Discussions of the Retreat

Day 1 – 12 November 2018

4.1 Official Opening Ceremony

His Excellency, Mr Mahboub Mallim, Executive Secretary of IGAD, opened the retreat, outlining the importance of Reconciliation and Dialogue which is an important subject of mediation within IGAD as it has become a standalone pillar in IGAD's peace and security strategy. He pointed out that the emerging crimes we see today are very different and where a new kind of dialogue is taking place to address these crimes. He reiterated the need for capacity building both for member states and political leaderships. He noted that the conversations on dialogue and reconciliation are not new and that these conversations have been had before, but in light of this intense conflicts continue to take place as in the case of South Sudan and the tensions between Eritrea and Ethiopia. Therefore, there is a need to refocus on the peace agreements that were signed and hold those leaders who are meant to implement peace agreements accountable. He raised the issue of child abuse during times of conflict, and indicated that the retreat will also offer some guidance on trauma healing to victims of conflict.

His Excellency, Ambassador Welile Nhlapo, Senior Advisor at ACCORD highlighted the difficulties the region once faced, however, 20 years later, with the positive changes that have been made, has brought hope and progress to the region. He reminisced that the environment has changed, where there is evidence of political will and good leadership which has become key in addressing hardships. He acknowledged the progress that has unfolded and that it can be a possibility to silence the guns by 2020. He emphasised that patience and perseverance is key in reconciliation. There is room for dialogue and reconciliation in this region and in Africa, and this is evident from past experiences and in the on-going peace processes. For true healing and reconciliation to happen, there must also be political will for warring parties to dialogue.

The representative of the EU in Ethiopia also provided his remarks, committing the EU's continued engagement on mediation, conflict prevention and transformation in the region. He commended IGAD in leading initiatives towards women's enhancement, and emphasised that peace mediation, education and conflict transformation can come about from a collective approach.

4.2 Setting the Scene –The need for Dialogue and Reconciliation for Conflict Prevention and Transformation

Panellists placed in context, the value of dialogue and reconciliation indicating that these have been used over time as one of the tools for conflict prevention, resolution and transformation. Dialogue is not only used in conflict or post-conflict situations, it can be used in times of peace to foster unity and stability, but also for citizens to develop a common understanding and agreement on key issues of the country and promote good governance, democracy and well-being. Reconciliation may represent a pragmatic way to deal with profound changes involving past injustices in order to achieve desired purposes such as building peace, nurturing democracy, promoting human rights and delivering justice. Dialogue and reconciliation mainly involves elements of truth knowledge, reparations, retributive justice, apology and forgiveness. Dialogue is a process rather than an end point, an idea that is forward thinking.

It was identified during the discussions that conflict analysis is the foundation for effective mediation. Incisive analysis can help with the design of the process as well as with the management of the intense, often confusing dynamics during talks. Conflict

analysis is a key component of conflict-sensitive practice as it provides the foundation to inform conflict sensitive programming, in particular in terms of understanding the interaction between the interventions and the context. This applies to all forms of intervention i.e. mediation, development, peacebuilding and humanitarian. As the main causes and factors contributing to conflict and to peace are identified, it is important to acknowledge that conflicts are multi-dimensional and multi-causal phenomena – that there is no single cause of conflict. It is also essential to establish linkages and synergies between causes and factors in order to identify potential areas for intervention and further prioritise them.

In addition, the plenary acknowledged that one of the weakest links in any mediation process is fragmentations in peace deals, which profoundly influences the peace processes. Complicated conflicts with many actors and splinter groups have become very common thus creating fault lines in peace processes. Peacemakers at the centre of dialogue and reconciliation must take into account the factors that affect the dialogue processes such as the levels of inclusion, expertise and skills. Moreover, it was reiterated that understanding the root causes of conflict is essential to a sustainable process of dialogue and reconciliation. One of the key issues that hinder sustainable dialogue is the failure to underscore and address the structural causes of conflict. Therefore, a systematic study of the causes, actors and dynamics of conflict is significant in conducting a progressive dialogue process and in achieving sustainable peace.

Furthermore, the plenary outlined that analysis cannot be absolutely exhaustive. Nevertheless, any issues that might trigger or escalate tensions must be addressed at that point in dialogue. Peacemakers should therefore be heedful of conflict early warning indicators. Early warning is a key element of conflict management and a prerequisite to conflict prevention. In this regard, the plenary highlighted that the early warning systems and mechanisms that are in place should be strengthened to enable timely alert and response in crises situations, noting that conflict analysis and early warning reinforce dialogue and reconciliation processes. Therefore, it is evident that there is need to link early warning mechanisms to response instruments and mechanisms. Accordingly, the predictive, preventive, responsive and adaptive capabilities of the region need to outpace crisis.

There is growing consensus that dialogue cannot be a once off process. There is room for frequent and continual dialogue and reconciliation in the region. This is evident in the past experiences and in ongoing reconciliation and peace processes in countries such as the Central African Republic (CAR), Somalia and Angola. Dialogue needs to happen frequently among all concerned stakeholders because the dynamics of diverse cultures and parties in conflict settings calls for inclusion of all parties and all stakeholders in dialogue processes. There is need for continued dialogue between those in power and the populace and all other stakeholders. Dialogue requires time, patience, perseverance and political goodwill. In CAR, the Conciliation Resources, the United Nations (UN), African Union (AU), Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), Religious Leaders, Youth Leaders, Displaced Persons, Women and children have all been involved in the national reconciliation which led to the Cessation of Hostilities and Peace Agreement Political Dialogue. The reconciliation process in Rwanda focuses on reconstructing the Rwandan identity, as well as balancing justice, truth, peace and security. Ongoing dialogue is a key factor to averting conflicts from arising. Dialogue should be viewed as a continual process in informal and formal settings. Furthermore, ongoing dialogue, does not only take place during times of conflicts but during times of peace as well.

4.3 The geo-politics context in the IGAD Region

The IGAD region stretches over an area of 5.2 million square km. The region has about

6900 km of coastline comprising of the Indian Ocean, Gulf of Eden, Gulf of Tadjoura and the Red Sea. Moreover, the IGAD Region has about a total of 6900 kilometres of international borders with Egypt, Libya, Chad, CAR, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Rwanda and Tanzania. The region is located in a strategic place in the Horn of Africa and blessed with a good climate, rich hinterland, a long coastline with deep natural ports and situated on major air traffic routes for tourism and commodity markets in Africa, the Far East, Middle East and Europe. The IGAD region is in transition as well, facing the dichotomy of crisis and transformation with socio-economic, demographic, weak governance and transnational threats being the key causes, triggers and stressors of insecurity in the region. Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan are some of the countries that have been affected by inter-state conflicts and civil wars. Furthermore, wars and famines have triggered major displacement within countries and across borders, making the Horn one of the main regions generating refugees and internally displaced persons. The Horn of Africa is a bridge between Africa and the Middle East and its nearness to the strategic Strait Bab el Mandab, has made the region a gateway for migrants to the Gulf and beyond, and more prone to external involvement than others in Africa.

It was expressed that the IGAD region is home to several military bases and peacekeeping missions. The thousands of Western military forces in Djibouti, the hundreds of Qatari peacekeeping troops that were in the Djibouti-Eritrea border, the UN and AU peacekeeping missions in Sudan, South Sudan and Somalia is an indication of the peace and security challenges in the IGAD region. Analysts say that Djibouti's geostrategic location and its stability in a volatile region has made it an important playground for world powers. America, France, Japan, China, Germany, Italy and Spain have troops hosted in the region's strategic corridors. Russia is also said to be joining the list of nations intent on establishing their foothold in the East and Horn of Africa. The plenary acknowledged that the military camps, for instance camp Lemonier, were installed to combat terrorism and piracy in the region. The terrorist threat is a significant one in the region. Terrorism has been a source of grave threat to the IGAD region's peace and development efforts. Somalia has played a role in the Islamist terrorism, albeit a specialized one. Al Shabaab has been a long-standing problem in the region where insurgents carried out strings of terrorist attacks in Somalia, Kenya and Uganda.

Terrorist activities further links Yemen to the Horn and East Africa region, especially to Somalia. The Somalia based Al Shabaab swore allegiance to the broad-based Al Qaeda terrorist group and is said to have formalized its links to the Yemen based Al Qaeda group. The war in Yemen has created vast opportunities for Al Qaeda and other militant groups to escalate chaos in the Horn which has exacerbated the already existing migration crisis in the region. The crisis in essence has caused an outflow of people from Yemen to the Horn of Africa which has sent shockwaves throughout the region and aggravated the already existing fragile situation for the refugees in the camps in Djibouti and Kenya. Consequently, the flow of small arms and light weapons through the porous borders has increased. Another area of concern which is important to note is the Indian Ocean region which is growing in strategic importance between China and India. The absence of rule of law in Somalia for several decades has increasingly allowed piracy, pirate attacks and other maritime crimes to thrive in the Horn and East Africa coastal regions. The concerted efforts to combat the crimes of terrorism and piracy in the region by the western world and international community have resulted in the region becoming highly militarized.

The discussions touched on the June 2017 Gulf Crises which saw Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and a number of allies sever diplomatic relations with and imposed an economic blockade on Qatar. The rivalries underpinning the Gulf crisis, particularly between the UAE, Qatar, Turkey and the Kingdom of Saudi, have spilled

into the East and Horn of Africa, notably fanning instability in Somalia. In the Horn of Africa, countries including Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan were directly or indirectly involved in the Gulf Crisis, whereas Djibouti downgraded its diplomatic relations with Qatar, Somalia remained neutral. There is no doubt that a decision from any of countries in the Horn of Africa regarding the Qatar and Gulf conflict significantly has far reaching implications on the social, political and economic landscape of the region.

The plenary remarked that the support of the international community plays a great part in the sustainable development of the region. Additionally, the IGAD region needs to develop regional strategies that promote peace, stability and sustainability, regional integration, economic development as well as strategies that strengthen and support national sovereignty.

Day 2 – 13 September

4.4 Effective dialogue in conflict prevention and transformation

The session focused on areas where dialogue has made a difference in the efforts to prevent and resolve conflict as well as in transforming societies. It looked at the role of dialogue on facilitating recovery from crisis, averting violent conflict and the general role of dialogue on conflict resolution.

The value of dialogue was highlighted, particularly that dialogue should not only be used in times of war, but in times of peace as well, as it helps to broaden debate. This was particularly the case in Tanzania. It was noted that although Ethiopia and Eritrea where at conflict with each other the recent dialogue between the two countries has brought about positive developments. Ethiopia and Eritrea have had a long standing war due to border clashes that have resulted in the deaths of thousands of people. It was further noted that dialogue can create a conducive environment for transformation and development, as it contributes towards changing mind-sets and building trust amongst people. It was pointed out that dialogue processes should be about learning from each other in a respectful and neutral manner, and that people should learn about knowing when and how to speak and when not to. Dialogue should aim at reaching better interests in the concerns of others and to find common ground, and that the process should be transferred into opportunities. The panellist shared his experience when organising a conference where dialogue was promoted, and an appeal was made to political leaders to commit to a culture of dialogue. Religious leaders were requested to preach and propagate a culture of dialogue and tolerance for peaceful coexistence.

Experiences from a religious perspective was also shared at the session. An example in which dialogue processes were led was in Kenya in 2010 during a review of the constitution. Having observed that the process was largely exclusive and the public were not considered by the politicians who engaged in this review, efforts were undertaken by the religious leaders who formed a parallel process with other religious communities to undertake this review. Whilst there was resistance and to an extent violence by the government who saw this as an opposition to them, they persevered and sacrificed to ensure they were part of the process.

Speakers emphasised that dialogue should be used as a form of transformation, to reinforce confidence, break stereotypes and fight discrimination. The speaker shared the example in the DRC where a stabilisation project called the democratic dialogue was established for the different segments of society. Through the different spaces and

platforms that were set up, the dynamics have changed within these societies. The lessons drawn from the experience is that processes of this nature require patience and there is a need to deeply reflect on the causes of conflict. The dialogue process should not only be about dialogue for peace but for development, the environment and stability.

During the plenary discussion an important point that was raised is that dialogue is present but there needs to be a process or a guideline in which to use it as an instrument, and further identify the way in which informal processes are able to feed into formal processes. It was noted that the church has an important role to play and that church leaders should be invited into the South Sudan diaspora in order to bring about a change in mind-sets and attitude.

4.5 Strengthening the Agency of Religious Leaders in Dialogue and Reconciliation

The session looked at the role of religious communities and interfaith dialogue in healing and reconciliation as an enabler for preventing and resolving conflict as well as in transforming societies. Speakers representing the faith based communities shared their experiences working towards dialogue and reconciliation within their respective communities.

Speakers outlined that their role as religious leaders is to safeguard the dignity of the human persona and safeguard the common good. They shared the positive outcomes that have been achieved through the work of the faith leaders in many conflict situations in Africa. This was exemplified through the work in the CAR, the DRC, Ivory Coast, Rwanda, Burundi and Zimbabwe. This work involved the engagement of many stakeholders from senior leadership in government to rebel groups and civil society. They acknowledged the impactful work that San Egidio is doing in Africa.

There was extensive experience sharing in the case of the DRC. It was explained that there have been 5 dialogues that have taken place since independence, and during this time after much fighting and deaths faith based institutions met in Bukavu on the bases that people were suffering, and that there was no communication with the outside world. They thus decided to organise days of prayers to sensitise the Christian and Muslim communities. An additional objective was to inform the international communities of the rebellion and the crisis in the DRC. The plan of action included days of prayer in Italy and an international symposium for peace. The dialogues were ongoing with various stakeholders including the belligerents and which led to the signing of an agreement which was presented at the Sun City Talks to adopt a memo on military structure. The speaker made the recommendation for the encouragement of the international organisations to support in building the capacities of religious leaders towards development in African countries.

The case of Uganda was also presented and the engagements at the different levels were explained. At the national level a religious leaders national task force was established and engaged the government and rebel groups as well as civilians. Religious leaders took the task of explaining to the Southerners of the conflict taking place in the North and the effects this has had on the economy and the country at large. Peace initiatives were also being led at the local level to advocate for peace. Religious leaders expressed solidarity and there was also engagement with stakeholders outside the religious communities. With this unity there was a shared and common goal. The lessons to be drawn from the experience is that effective coordination is necessary among the religious leaders and other actors. There needs to be sustained lobbying and advocacy as well as engagement with the government and rebel groups. A valuable output of the engagement of religious

leaders in Uganda was that they were able to contribute to the policy on Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), for healing and reconciliation. The presenter also brought to light some key issues that remain, namely: the need to establish linkages with the different track levels of mediation; there is an expectation for religious leaders to undertake healing and reconciliation efforts, but they too had been affected by conflict and have suffered trauma and thus there should be a 'healing of healers'; and religious leaders should serve as observers in the IGAD processes, in order to enable them to contribute to these peace processes.

The role that religion and religious leaders play during times of conflict was raised during the plenary discussion. One point of contention was that the position of religious tends to become compromised, especially in some cases where religious leaders register as political leaders. The messages of religion then become irrelevant. It was noted that there is a need to raise the awareness of the role of religious leaders in conflict and that these leaders should be cautious that their moral authority does not get diluted.

4.6 Inclusion of women and youth in dialogue and reconciliation processes at the community, national and regional levels

Traditionally, women's participation in politics, governance and decision making has been insignificant. For decades, women have been at the grassroots of working and advocating for their rights, including in conflict settings. At the international level, that momentum was brought into the fourth world conference on women in Beijing in 1995, which included in its outcome document an entire section on women in armed conflict. Five years later, resolution 1325 was adopted. This resolution reaffirms the important role of women in prevention and resolution of conflicts and urges all actors to increase the participation of women in peace processes. It was highlighted during the discussions that there are thousands of women who are victims of rape, trauma, and physical injuries during conflicts. Women and girls are particularly targeted by the use of sexual violence during conflicts as a tactic of war to dominate, humiliate and spread fear. It was put forward that the AU, IGAD and fellow RECs/RMs with the support of the international community and CSOs develop guidelines and strategies that protect civilians, including women and girls from all forms of sexual violence and further provide a safe space in which reconciliation and healing can take place. The adoption and implementation of UNSCR 1325 and UNSCR 1820 is fundamental in ensuring women inclusion, participation and representation in peace and political processes.

It was acknowledged that women play an important role in dialogue and reconciliation processes at the local, national and regional levels. There is need for the gradual process of reconciliation to take into consideration the role and efforts of women in conflict resolution, even in thematic areas such as trauma healing. Mechanisms have to be put in place that shift attitudes within dominant cultures to create a space in which rights-based approaches to reconciliation can take place. At a regional level, the AU established the Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation (FemWise-Africa), to strengthen the role of women in conflict prevention and mediation. Organizations such as ACCORD and the Crisis Management Initiative (CMI) have supported the operationalization of FemWise-Africa to promote the capacity and capabilities of the network.

It was noted that IGAD member states have made gradual progress in including and engaging women in political processes as well. Member states have put in place the 30% gender-rule in legislation in an effort to ensure gender parity. However, some countries continue to experience setbacks and still have areas of deficiency in promoting the inclusion of women in peacemaking processes and decision-making levels. In some

countries however, significant progress has been noted, for example, Ethiopia's march towards gender parity in key leadership positions is unmatched. In the recent months, Ethiopia has appointed the first female president and the first female Supreme Court Chief. The country has as well appointed women in half (50%) of the cabinet positions.

The plenary also discussed the need to include the youth in decision and peacemaking processes. In Africa, women and youth constitute 70% of the population. The Demographic age structure estimates that 55% of the population in the IGAD region are youth. According to a report by the World Bank, youth account for 60% of the African unemployed population. The threats to stability and development posed by the rise of radicalization and violent extremism in the region is attributed to the increasing numbers in unemployment among the youth. Meaningful engagement of the youth in reconciliation efforts will reduce the risk of escalation of disputes and relapse into violence. It was noted that many of the youth in conflict zones grow up in a context where they inherit prejudice and hate. Yet, most of these inherited prejudices can be overcome by positive life experiences and constant dialogue. For many of the older generation the negative experiences of the past have left them jaded and damaged by animosity.

In December 2015, the Security Council adopted Resolution 2250 which recognizes that young people play an important and positive role in the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security. In this regard, member states have made some efforts to engage the youth in meaningful processes. For instance, Kenya has developed and revamped the National Youth Service, an empowerment mechanism to engage the youth in nation building and reconstruction. Further, the discussants expressed that the notion "youth are the future" needs to be transformed into actual support and involvement of the youth in conflict resolution and reconciliation processes. In many of our countries, youth are left out of meaningful processes because they are elements of contestation that befits their age.

Day 3 – 14 September

4.7 Challenges and good practices towards promoting dialogue and reconciliation

With contemporary wars now being fought with a huge impact on the civil population rather than two armies fighting each other on isolated battlefield, the conditions for peacemaking, mediation, conflict resolution and transformation have changed to become more complex. It was pointed out that the complexity of most conflicts boils down to institutional weakness causing a lack of alternatives to violence combined with lack of democracy and rule of law in member states. Promoting transitional justice has become integral to international peacebuilding efforts as well, based on the assumption that establishing peace requires processing a society's legacy of violence. The plenary recommended the regional body to develop a mechanism that promotes democracy and rule of law. Functioning democracies prevent the recurrence of conflict by providing non-violent channels to express and deal with competing interests and grievances. Democracy support typically includes assistance to elections, constitution-writing, the administration, rule-of-law, human rights and to civil society organizations.

In order to have dialogue, it is essential to recognize and include all parties to the conflict in the dialogue process. Therefore, process design and conflict analysis are vital during dialogue and reconciliation. In the case of Rwanda for instance, it was unsystematic to identify the genocide as an ethnic conflict without an in-depth analysis of the causes of the conflict. Each conflict is unique in terms of the particular underlying issues that

belligerents are contesting. It is therefore important to understand the needs of all parties to a conflict in order to undertake a successful dialogue. It was also highlighted that understanding the context of the parties and issues is key; it helps in understanding their fears and priorities. Among the issues noted which hinder sustainable peace process is the failure of addressing the structural and root causes of conflict. Dialogue demands a progressive leadership, legitimized through the inclusion of local communities in the processes. This helps to bridge any polarized or entrenched positions. Dialogue must be conducted through transparent discussions both at all stages of mediation linking the Track II diplomacy to Track III and Track I diplomacy. It was observed that there is no one-size-fits all strategy for how to mediate, negotiate and sustain peace after conflicts. Peacemakers should adapt to the shifting situations without losing sight of the basic principles and elements of reconciliation.

Another concern raised was the role of religious leaders in conflict and mediation. It was noted that religious differences can be easily manipulated and used to mobilize communities and individuals for violence. However, religion can also be a vital resource in promoting understanding and in overcoming conflicts. Indeed, religion can provide a foundation for harmonious and peaceful co-existence. During the Lord's Resistance Army insurgency in Northern Uganda, religious leaders played a central role in advocating for peace and solidarity. However, in many instances, political leaders deliberately compromised and created division amongst religious leaders. This has in turn compromised the neutrality and impartiality of religious leaders and hindered national dialogue processes. For example, in Uganda, religious leaders called for national dialogue but this process has not yet taken off due to the power dynamics among political leaders.

4.8 Recommendations for developing a reconciliation framework and a dialogue index for the IGAD Region

The East and Horn of Africa has endured the incapacitating effects of violent conflict for several decades. This has spilled over across borders into neighbouring countries where by the traditional inter-state conflicts have been replaced by intra-state conflicts. These conflicts have national and regional dimensions in the way they are executed. The Horn of Africa's regional conflict systems is difficult to stabilize as they include more than one state, actors and have no regionally coordinated reconciliation strategy to promote and consolidate peace. The absence of a coordinated regional reconciliation in the region and the lack of resources and capacity means that these mechanisms remain incapable of promoting and sustaining regional peace, justice and reconciliation. The outcome of using dialogue before violence is greater in the long run and necessary for reconciliation.

Regional reconciliation needs to be operationalized in a progressive and cascading manner to contribute towards sustainable peace and regional integration. In the absence of good political will and a genuine belief in the intentions of political parties, communities and neighbouring countries then it becomes difficult to achieve reconciliation and integration. Consequently, the processes and mechanisms that are designed and adopted to implement regional reconciliation will undoubtedly play a catalytic role in promoting peace and regional integration. There needs to be considerations on how the AU as well as IGAD can develop mechanisms to ensure that governments abide by and commit to good political will and ensure compliance to responding to the interests of the nation. Indeed, good political will is central to effective dialogue, reconciliation and healing. The way in which the Ethiopian and Eritrean conflict is resolved is a good example of good political will and one that other member states can learn from. More specifically, good political will, leadership, good governance, the will of the community affected, and inclusion of all necessary stakeholders are equally the core ingredients of sustainable peace process and outcomes.

The plenary underscored the need for a Gender-Approachable and Gender Sensitive Reconciliation Framework. It was stressed that the framework must address gender concerns, gender based violence, culture and norms to foster healing and reconciliation. The framework should take into consideration the African approaches of conflict resolution as well as an in-depth gender analysis and an assessment of the historical causes of conflict. It should provide a strategic platform for conflict transformation in the region. It was noted that the participation of women in peacemaking is essential for the quality of peace processes in the long term. Women are the custodians of fundamental values of the society and often find innovative solutions to conflicts. The framework needs to be strategic, integrative and promote conviction based approach to dialogue and reconciliation. It should guide peacemakers on how to address trauma healing, transitional justice and reconciliation. Transitional justice encourages reconciliation by ensuring restorative justice and communal reparations. In addition, meaningful reconciliation requires bottom-up and top-down approaches that focus on past trauma so as not to cause recurring violence.

The plenary stated that the framework should incorporate the 4 pillars of Faith Inspired Reconciliation; Mercy, Truth, Justice, and Peace. Justice raises powerful images of making things right, creating equal opportunity, rectifying the wrong and restoration. It was stated that conflicts are multi-dimensional which need multiple interventions and approaches. The framework should therefore maximize on the comparative advantages of the inter-faith based groups. The plenary discussed the need for electoral reforms as well. The region is in need of a regional mechanism to address electoral violence.

The retreat emphasized IGAD's pivotal role in developing a regional reconciliation framework. The reconciliation framework is to put all IGAD member states, mediators, partners and all stakeholders at the same level of information, understanding and commitment to a reconciliation process. Additionally, it should be a revamped and living document that can be updated periodically. The framework and dialogue need to constitute African Approaches to conflict prevention. Moreover, the framework needs to promote ownership and ensure the financial, diplomatic and political independence of dialogue and reconciliation while benefiting from regional and international inputs and support. It should promote neutrality, impartiality and trust building. Reconciliation should not be viewed as a process that reconciles and rewards political and military belligerents but rather as one to address all constitutional, political and socio-economic and cultural root-causes of the conflict with a view to finding solutions that would bring peace and stability to conflict situations.

5. Draft Outcomes Statement

Overview

The 3rd IGAD High Level Retreat on Mediation held from 12-14 September 2018 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, created a platform to enable discussions on the role of reconciliation and dialogue as tools for conflict prevention, resolution and transformation. More so, it looked at the current peace processes taking place in the IGAD region and in Africa, focusing on how dialogue has been used to impact positively the outcomes of the peace processes towards sustainable peace agreements. It further provided the opportunity for mediators and mediation practitioners to assess the missed opportunities in which dialogue should have taken place in the build up to peace processes. In light of the discussions that took place; the following highlights and recommendations were discussed.

1. Benefits of Promoting Dialogue

Dialogue can create a conducive environment for transformation and development. It aims at better understanding interests and concerns of others as well as to finding common ground. A process of dialogue is key in creating an open mind and in changing attitudes which can bring lasting solutions. It enables new approaches to addressing issues and helps in transforming societies. However, this is a long process which also requires changing mindsets and building trust amongst people.

2. Consideration on the inclusivity of issues and of different groups affected by the conflict

The matter of inclusivity was emphasised, with the need and necessity to engage actors and stakeholders of a conflict at the very outset of peace processes. Marginalisation was identified as one of the causes of conflict. Many groups who feel that their needs are neglected, often resort to alternative ways of sharing their concerns and often it is in a violent way. All groups that have been affected by the conflict and which include, women's organisations, religious groups, ethnic groups, youth organisations and as well as armed groups have to be engaged early in the formal processes as this will provide a more positive outcome and ownership to the implementation of peace agreements. However, the dilemma that is faced is who can be involved and who should be excluded, and furthermore, who makes the decision to include and or exclude groups from the process. Besides inclusivity of the actors, inclusion of their issues is also key, which will strengthen the ownership of the process and the outcome. An inclusive approach can also promote the process of reconciliation towards managing and transforming conflict.

3. Identifying the problem signs/using early warning systems

An important point raised is that during a mediation processes, all issues that have the potential of being problematic in the future needs to be addressed at that point. There should be no assumption that these will resolve themselves as it can manifest into serious problems years down the line and create obstacles to dialogue and reconciliation processes. The early warning systems and mechanisms that are in place should also be strengthened to enable timely alert and response to any crises situations that are likely to erupt into future violent conflicts.

4. Conflict Analysis

It was highlighted that understanding the context of the parties and issues is key, it helps in understanding their fears and priorities. Among the issues noted which hinder sustainable peace processes is the failure in addressing the structural causes of conflict. Conflict analysis is key in understanding these structural challenges and root causes of these conflicts. Failure to understand the issues affecting people, will also create an obstacle to reconciliation. Systematic conflict analysis in the region is therefore key.

5. Political will is essential for national and regional dialogue

Participants stressed the need for good political will by leaders to promote dialogue at the national and regional levels. The way in which the Ethiopian and Eritrean conflict was resolved is a good example of decisive political will and one that other member states can learn from. Indeed, there needs to be considerations on how the African Union as well as IGAD can develop mechanisms to ensure that governments abide and commit to good political will and ensure compliance to responding to the interests of the nation. Political will is a key element of successful national dialogue and reconciliation and should be exercised through continued dialogue between those in power and the communities; opposition groups and conflicting parties. Political goodwill is required to steer the

region in a peaceful direction with the support of the AU, regional organizations and international partners. It was noted that where goodwill lacks, dialogue can be used to drag the peace process for individual interests and gains. Further, the will of the people affected by conflict and other stakeholders is key in ensuring a sustainable process and outcome.

6. Ongoing and sustained national dialogue

Dialogue cannot be a once off process. It needs to take place frequently and cannot only be between political leaders and those being governed. It also needs to take place among the populace themselves. This will help to establish what people want and will also help to identify the problematic issues that can lead to conflicts later. Ongoing dialogue will be a key step to averting conflicts from arising. Dialogue should be viewed as a continual process in formal and informal settings. Further, ongoing dialogue does not only take place during times of conflict, but during times of peace as well.

7. Role of Religious Leaders

Religion can be a source of peace, a resource for peace and a source of conflict. It was highlighted that religious institutions and religious leaders are well placed to undertake peacebuilding initiatives. They have the capacity to engage with government institutions as well as with local communities. The legitimacy and moral authority that religious leaders have provides a wider outreach to people and on sensitive issues. Thus religious leaders and institutions should be engaged in dialogue and in promoting reconciliation and healing within communities. Dialogue can be effective in facilitating effective recovery from crisis with the right leadership and mechanisms. Religious leaders play a vital role in peace making and conflict resolution. The principles of neutrality, impartiality and transparency should be adhered to by the leaders. It was further highlighted that the importance of religious leaders establishing common principles and values should not be compromised by political leaders. The need for knowledge engagement in prophetic roles and the need to link the constitution/constituency, policy and knowledge was reiterated.

8. Documentation and utilisation of good practices

In many conflict settings, dialogue has changed the dynamics, it helps to understand the causes of conflicts. It addresses the root causes of conflict seeking to prevent escalation of disputes and relapse into violence. Participants outlined the need to practice and replicate good practices coming out of these dialogue processes. They echoed the need to harvest the good practices of preventive diplomacy and replicate them- horizontally and vertically, i.e. bottom-up and top-down approaches. Experience shows dialogue to be very productive at all levels in conflict resolution and reconciliation. Track III diplomacy, for instance incorporates technical experts, academia and knowledgeable individuals on conflict resolution skills. The outcome of the work of these actors should be documented and utilised to inform current and future processes.

9. Developing a curriculum on reconciliation and dialogue

At the regional level a curriculum on reconciliation and dialogue should be developed and taken through a consultative process that leads to the adoption by member states. Member states were requested to incorporate the curriculum into learning institutions, particularly at the level of primary education to commence teaching and learning on a culture of peace, dialogue and reconciliation.

10. The vital role that women and the youth play in dialogue and reconciliation

Women play an important role in dialogue and reconciliation processes at the local, national and regional levels. In Africa, women and youth constitute 70% of the population. Gender equality and security is important in conflict resolution and reconciliation mechanisms. The plenary reiterated the importance of active participation of women in peace processes. The gradual process of reconciliation should take into consideration the role and efforts of women in conflict resolution, even in thematic areas like trauma healing.

Participants underscored the challenges women and youth face in peace processes. These included lack of skills and knowledge on healing and reconciliation; and lack of strategic planning of women and youth participation in peacemaking. It was emphasised that there is need to reformulate peace processes to include effective participation of youth and women.

11. Effective Coordination and partnerships

The plenary outlined the need for effective coordination to achieve the common goal of dialogue and reconciliation. There should be a coherent lobbying for dialogue and peace during crisis. There is need to establish linkages between religious leaders at the local, national and regional levels and with political leaders. The participants identified that Track I diplomacy cannot by itself guarantee peace. There should be a holistic approach to reconciliation where the Track II and Track III Diplomacy are incorporated into the dialogue processes.

12. The Role of External Actors in Dialogue Processes

The geo-political dynamics and development in the region and the involvement, complacency and influence of external actors was pointed out during the deliberations. The participants remarked that external actors to some degree influence the peace processes as a result of their financial investments in mediation and peacemaking processes. The plenary commented that, a successful reconciliation can be fully achieved if financed and supported by Africa under theme “Africans for Africa”. It was acknowledged that donor funding has contributed to peace support efforts on the continent but there needs to be caution on who then leads and is in control of these processes. Ownership brings credibility and legitimacy to a process, therefore, members states need to consider funding their own efforts, considering there is a lot of resources on the continent.

13. Scale of benefits and its complexities

It was highlighted that during peace processes, the priorities of the parties is to ensure that their financial and political interests are seen to first. Therefore, this issue prolongs the other more critical matters that need to be addressed in responding to conflicts. It can also create more complexities to the peace process.

14. Overcoming the past and trauma healing

Participants emphasised that the only way the country can move forward and achieve the goal on a successful and sustainable peace process, is to accept and come to terms of the past atrocities that people have experienced. Further it was recommended that there should be a policy on trauma healing in order for there to be reconciliation. People need to be healed and trained in healing to help societies come to terms with their difficult and painful past. Trauma healing and reconciliation is the primary steps towards human security. The psychological and psycho-social impacts of violence on communities' make

reconciliation a complex process. The grandness of acknowledging the past, the ability to heal and forgive for lasting and sustainable peace is in indeed a miraculous event. Mediators, negotiators and peace builders should have the skills to build trust between the state and citizenry and among communities. Dialogue enhances nation building, trust building, social cohesion and changes the perception of affected communities.

15. Addressing the role of culture

Participants highlighted the role of culture, and the way in which this can hamper the enhancement of women and youth in peace processes, particularly in very traditional and conservative environments. However, it was also raised that it is time to tackle some of these cultures that are not good practices for both women and the youth.

16. Rethinking the role of elections in Africa

Elections have become a source of violence, becomes it has become a winner takes all situation. Elections are the opportunity to benefit from the many resources available in Africa. It is an aggregating factor of conflict. The way elections have been configured is not working for Africa and needs to be reconfigured. IGAD needs to come up with a new formula, where there is a need to have some distribution of power between the ruling party and the opposition.

17. Developing a reconciliation framework and a dialogue index for the IGAD Region

In setting up a reconciliation framework, the following factors need to be considered. The framework should be a structured approach that is guided by a reconciliation policy. The vision and outcomes need to be articulated. The framework should also set out the practical steps and resources that are needed. These resources should include financial as well as expert provisions. The framework must be multidimensional and combine faith based approaches and it should also include traditional mechanisms of reconciliation and mediation alongside the modern mechanisms. There should be coordination and flexible complementarity with other organisations. It should be indicated when the AU should come in and work with IGAD on mediation. The design of the framework needs to address matters on dealing with perpetrators; building national capacities of members and mediators in non-political skills to address reconciliation and healing.

The way forward

- ❖ Undertaking consultations and meetings with experts to develop the reconciliation framework
- ❖ In-depth assessment of the historical causes of conflict
- ❖ In depth assessment of the existing mechanisms on dialogue and reconciliation to determine how well they are working
- ❖ A regional mechanism to address electoral violence
- ❖ Capacity building in methods to dialogue and in trauma healing
- ❖ Institutional strengthening for effective transitional justice, healing and reconciliation
- ❖ IGAD to develop a regional policy on reconciliation and dialogue

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